

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A precipitated silica having the following physico-chemical characteristics:

|  |                     |                                     |
|--|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| pH (5% in water) (ISO 787-9)   |                     | 3 - 8                               |
| BET surface area (DIN 66131)   | (m <sup>2</sup> /g) | 400 - 600                           |
| DBP absorption value (DIN 53601, in relation to dried substance) (g/100 g) |                     | [[ $\geq$ 380]]<br><u>382</u> - 420 |
| Tapped density (ISO 787-11)  | (g/l)               | 100 - 200                           |
| ALPINE sieve residue > 63 $\mu$ (ISO 8130-1)                               | (%)                 | 0.1 - 40                            |

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): The precipitated silica according to Claim 1, which has the following physico-chemical characteristics:

|  |                     |                                     |
|--|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| pH (5% in water) (ISO 787-9)   |                     | 3 - 8                               |
| BET surface area (DIN 66131)   | (m <sup>2</sup> /g) | 400 - 600                           |
| DBP absorption value (DIN 53601, in relation to dried substance) (g/100 g) |                     | [[ $\geq$ 380]]<br><u>382</u> - 420 |
| Tapped density (ISO 787-11)  | (g/l)               | 140 - 200                           |
| ALPINE sieve residue > 63 $\mu$ (ISO 8130-1)                               | (%)                 | 10 - 40                             |

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The precipitated silica according to Claim 1, which has the following physico-chemical characteristics:

|  |                     |                              |
|--|---------------------|------------------------------|
| pH (5% in water) (ISO 787-9)   |                     | 3 – 8                        |
| BET surface area (DIN 66131)   | (m <sup>2</sup> /g) | 400 – 600                    |
| DBP absorption value (DIN 53601, in relation to dried substance) (g/100 g) |                     | [[≥380]]<br><u>382</u> – 420 |
| Tapped density (ISO 787-11)  | (g/l)               | 140 – 180                    |
| ALPINE sieve residue > 63μ (ISO 8130-1)                                    | (%)                 | 1 - 10                       |

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The precipitated silica according to Claim 1, which has the following physico-chemical characteristics:

|   |                     |                              |
|---|---------------------|------------------------------|
| pH (5% in water) (ISO 787-9)  |                     | 3 – 8                        |
| BET surface area (DIN 66131)  | (m <sup>2</sup> /g) | 400 – 600                    |
| DBP absorption value (DIN 53601, in relation to dried substance) (g/100g) |                     | [[≥380]]<br><u>382</u> – 420 |
| Tapped density (ISO 787-11)   | (g/l)               | 100 – 130                    |
| ALPINE sieve residue > 63μ (ISO 8130-1)                                   | (%)                 | 0.1 - 1                      |

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): A process for manufacturing a precipitated silica, which comprises:

while stirring water in a vessel with a force sufficient to subject the medium to shear containing water heated to 35°C to 45°C,

a) adding water and sulfuric acid together within at least 100 minutes, to the vessel and maintaining a pH of 6–7, wherein the addition of substances is interrupted for 60 to 120

minutes and when the addition of the substances to the vessel has been completed, a solids content of 36 to 42 g/l remains; and

b) filtering the solid matter, washing the filter cake and subjecting the solid material to a short retention drying process,

wherein the precipitated silica has the following physico-chemical characteristics:

|  |                     |           |
|--|---------------------|-----------|
| pH (5% in water) (ISO 787-9)   |                     | 3 – 8     |
| BET surface area (DIN 66131)   | (m <sup>2</sup> /g) | 400 – 600 |
| DBP absorption value (DIN 53601, in relation to dried substance) (g/100 g) |                     | 380 – 420 |
| Tapped density (ISO 787-11)  | (g/l)               | 100 – 200 |
| ALPINE sieve residue > 63 $\mu$ (ISO 8130-1)                               | (%)                 | 0.1 - 40  |

Claim 6 (Original): The process according to Claim 5, which further comprises conducting a short retention time drying process (c) by liquefying the filter cake to a solids content of less than 18% by weight and spray-drying the resulting suspension.

Claim 7 (Original): The process according to Claim 6, wherein the short retention time drying process in (c) is conducted by drying the filter cake with a spin flash dryer.

Claim 8 (Original): The process according to Claim 6, wherein the silica obtained after the short retention drying process is adjusted to pH 7 to 8 with ammonia gas.

Claim 9 (Original): The process according to Claim 6, wherein the filter cake is washed with diluted sulfuric acid.

Claim 10 (Previously Presented): A method of formulating an animal feed, comprising:  
combining nutritive feed components of the animal feed with the precipitated silica of Claim 1 as a carrier.

Claim 11 (Previously Presented): A method of formulating a vitamin formulation, comprising:  
combining vitamin components of the vitamin formulation with the precipitated silica of Claim 1 as a carrier.

Claim 12 (Previously Presented): A method of formulating a catalyst, comprising:  
combining components of the catalyst with the precipitated silica of Claim 1 as a carrier for catalytically active components of the catalyst.

Claim 13 (Previously Presented): A method of formulating a free-flowing composition, comprising:  
formulating ingredients of the composition with the precipitated silica of Claim 1 which functions as a free-flow or anti-caking agent.

Claim 14 (Original): A method of converting a liquid into powder form, comprising:  
combining said liquid with the precipitated silica of Claim 1 as an auxiliary thereby converting the liquid into powder.

Claim 15 (Original): The powder prepared by the method of Claim 14.

Claim 16 (Original): An elastomer containing mixture prepared by combining an elastomer with the precipitated silica of Claim 1.

Claim 17 (Previously Presented): A method of manufacturing a catalyst carrier, comprising:

combining components of the catalyst carrier with the precipitated silica according to Claim 1.

Claim 18 (Canceled).

Claim 19 (New): The precipitated silica according to Claim 1, wherein the DBP absorption value (DIN 53601, in relation to dried substance) is at least 383 g/100 g.

Claim 20 (New): The precipitated silica according to Claim 1, wherein the DBP absorption value (DIN 53601, in relation to dried substance) is at least 387 g/100 g.